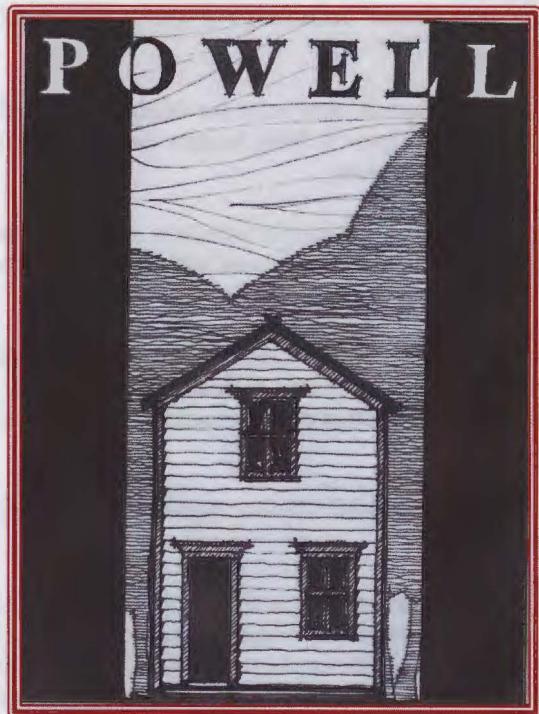


**Dedication of Plaque
and
Memorial Bench
Powell Family House Site**



Powell Logo
*Designed by Joseph L. Roberts Great,
Great, Great, Great Grandson*

**Leeper Park
South Bend, Indiana**

**June 1, 2018
11:00 A. M.**

Powell House Story

(Information from family bibles and stories handed down through generations)

In 1858, Farrow and Rebecca Powell, their 12 children and grandchildren bought properties and built homes in South Bend and Mishawaka, Indiana. It is believed that they were the first African Americans to build homes in these cities.

The South Bend home was built on the east side of Main Street. This house was called the “Long House” because it was made with several adjoining sections.

Each one was used as separate homes by the children. It is said it extended a half block. As downtown grew S. Main became commercial and the Powell’s moved to more residential areas.

Over the years, piece by piece sections were torn down until only one remained. In the late 1940’s it was moved behind the Sears and Roebuck building.

Years later the last remnant of the “Long House” stood neglected on Inwood’s (formerly building of Sears & Roebuck) parking lot. Hardly anyone, knew it’s significance or even noticed the weather streaked-shabby framed structure.

March 27, 1972 the South Bend Tribune “Action Line” printed a brief story about the house.

After reading the article and talking to their teacher, the 8th grade class at Pierre Navarre school decided they wanted to save the house. They wrote city officials; sent a plea to “Action Line” asking the community for help. As a result, the community, Olivet A.M.E. Church and descendants of the Farrow Powell family joined the project.

\$2,000.00 was raised and the house was moved in 1973 to Leeper Park close to the Pierre Navarre cabin (1st permanent settler in South Bend).

More money was needed for restoration so it could be made into a house museum to show how blacks lived in early South Bend. It was to be a memorial to the city’s black pioneers. During restoration it was vandalized 3 times – 3rd time it was burned down on Halloween night, 1980.

We as a family are appreciative and show our gratitude to the City of South Bend, Mayor Pete Buttigieg and Gabrielle Robinson for bringing this to the attention of the Parks and Recreation Department.

Program



Prayer Rev. Rick Jackson
Olivet African Methodist Episcopal Church

Selection Larry Brucker

Remarks • Elicia Feasel, Administrator, *Historical Preservation*
• Mayor Pete Buttigieg, *South Bend, Indiana*
• Tim Scott, Pres. & 1st District Representative
South Bend City Council
• Randy Ray, Executive Director
Northern Indiana Center for History

Selection Larry Brucker

Remarks • Gabrielle Robinson
Biographer, Author & Academic

Reflections of Powell Family *Peter DeKever*
Penn High School, Mishawaka, IN

Presentation of Plaque Parks & Recreation Department

Presentation of Bench Powell Family





Thanks to Gabrielle Robinson, a local history author, who just recently showed an interest in the Powell family. In her research found the story about the Powell family house. She has spearheaded this project to erect a staked plaque on the Powell house foundation in Leeper Park.

She was born in Berlin at the end of World War II, and has been educated in Europe and the US, earning an MA from Columbia University in New York and a Ph. D from the University of London in modern drama. She is now a Professor Emerita of English.

After writing academic books, Gabrielle turned to local history and German history with her memoir/biography *The Reluctant Nazi: Searching for my Grandfather*. Her most recent book (2015) is *Better Homes of South Bend: An American Story of Courage about African American Studebaker workers who in 1950 stood up against discrimination to build homes in a white neighborhood.*



Powell House

